

Josh Sherretts  
Period 1  
AP

It was a friendly dog.

Braindead, the Great Dane jumped from the hands of Jim Bob, the local dogcatcher. He raced across interstate 74 to the large sugar maple tree twenty feet from the road. There, under the tree, stood an eccentric old man watching two goldfinches on a nearby branch. The Dane raced towards the man, knocked him to the ground, and sat licked his face until the man started laughing and patting Braindead on the head.

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Pete Ondish  
AP English  
This has been a bad winter

It was the night I ate the last can of cat food that I finally snapped. Realizing that any chance of rescue was impossible, I tried to calm myself by repeating out loud in a nonchalant tone, "Well this has been a bad winter." Yet, about twenty feet outside my cabin window, was the ice cube that showcased the frozen gaze of my calico, Prissy, who didn't make it to the door that first night. By day, I foraged the vast cavernous cupboards that used to hold riches of pasta and crackers, and conserved energy by watching static reruns on television. By night, I was kept awake by again another verse of the crooning wind, whose haunting melody seemed to never finish. The worst though, was the snow that clung to the outside of the windows, and watched me, a mouse in my own wheel, every step as I paced back and forth plotting against it; first with a shovel, but most recently with my heat ray vision.

Emily Schlaudecker  
Period 1 AP English  
25 October 2004  
College Essay Writing

Beginning Sentence: My teacher is strict.

I am a perfect angel, but nobody is safe from the ridicule and discipline of Mrs. Smith. Every morning she strides into the room after the first bell has chimed and we all instantly silence ourselves and cower in our desks. There is nothing else to do except silently hope we won't break one of her unwritten rules. Mrs. Smith makes Hitler look like a softy. With her rigidly starched and creased pants she patrols the classroom for cheaters during our pop quiz like a hyena roams the Serengeti looking for its next helpless meal to scavenge upon. Her hair is pulled back into a bun so tight that her face is permanently pulled into its stern "I mean business" expression. That bun is always in such perfect order its as if she's even warned her own hair about the terror that should await it if one strand should happen to fall out of place. So much as sneeze at an "inappropriate time" and you're in for it. I once bent down to pick up the pencil that had rolled off my desk during a test, and that was enough to push her over the edge. First came the loud verbal reprimand accompanied by her "stare of shame" as she pointed me out into the hall. Then she followed me out and spent the rest of the period cornering me and lecturing me about how disturbing others while taking a test was wrong. This transitioned into a lecture about how children didn't have enough respect which transitioned into a story about her army lieutenant father. All this time she was so close to my face I could smell the tuna sandwich she had eaten for lunch beginning to decay in the little crevices between her teeth.

**\*\* Shooting an elephant was quite traumatic.**

The creature died more slowly than I ever imagined. I was called upon to get rid of the elephant. It had been a pet, believe it or not, of an elderly neighbor of mine. The elephant, named Jonesy after its owner's son, was a retired carnival show act.

One day when the owner was away Jonesy broke out of its stall and was loose in our small, usually quiet neighborhood. It, unfortunately, encountered a couple of my other neighbors' pets—a black lab and a house cat. For whatever reason, probably an accident, Jonesy had trampled both to death.

Our small town had no local police force. So my neighbors called upon me, having been an ex-Marine, to stop the carnage. People were afraid. Our neighbor's pet, Jonesy, had to be stopped.

He wasn't difficult to locate, but shooting him was a whole other story. I aimed at his vital organs and released the first cartridge from my .416 Rigby. He didn't even flinch. He looked at me with a knowing expression. I swear to you, I think he knew what was happening. I couldn't bear this for much longer. I unloaded five more bullets rapidly into his heart/lung region. The sixth shell dropped him to his knees. So I reloaded, and walked closer, deciding to empty six more into its brain. I did. He still didn't die. It was as if Jonesy couldn't die—maybe he was waiting for something outside of all of us—perhaps I was interfering with his destiny.

I continued on and eventually he gave up. There was so much blood that perhaps he bled to death.

The event changed my life. I can't shoot any animal any more. Shooting Jonesy has turned me against any form of killing. I understand that sometimes death is the only link to survival, but I can't take that road. The difference between life and death is only the beating of a heart. And mine beats more slowly because of what I've done.

(341 words)

## Hugh Gallagher's College Essay

3A. ESSAY: IN ORDER FOR THE ADMISSIONS STAFF OF OUR COLLEGE TO GET TO KNOW YOU, THE APPLICANT, BETTER, WE ASK THAT YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

ARE THERE ANY SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE HAD, OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU HAVE REALIZED, THAT HAVE HELPED TO DEFINE YOU AS A PERSON?

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I am a dynamic figure, often seen scaling walls and crushing ice. I have been known to remodel train stations on my lunch breaks, making them more efficient in the area of heat retention. I translate ethnic slurs for Cuban refugees, I write award-winning operas, I manage time efficiently. Occasionally, I tread water for three days in a row.

I woo women with my sensuous and godlike trombone playing, I can pilot bicycles up severe inclines with unflagging speed, and I cook Thirty-Minute Brownies in twenty minutes. I am an expert in stucco, a veteran in love, and an outlaw in Peru.

Using only a hoe and a large glass of water, I once single-handedly defended a small village in the Amazon Basin from a horde of ferocious army ants. I play bluegrass cello, I was scouted by the Mets, I am the subject of numerous documentaries. When I'm bored, I build large suspension bridges in my yard. I enjoy urban hang gliding. On Wednesdays, after school, I repair electrical appliances free of charge.

I am an abstract artist, a concrete analyst, and a ruthless bookie. Critics worldwide swoon over my original line of corduroy evening wear. I don't perspire. I am a private citizen, yet I receive fan mail. I have been caller number nine and have won the weekend passes. Last summer I toured New Jersey with a traveling centrifugal-force demonstration. I bat 400. My deft floral arrangements have earned me fame in international botany circles. Children trust me.

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I can hurl tennis rackets at small moving objects with deadly accuracy. I once read Paradise Lost, Moby Dick, and David Copperfield in one day and still had time to refurbish an entire dining room that evening. I know the exact location of every food item in the supermarket. I have performed several covert operations for the CIA. I sleep once a week; when I do sleep, I sleep in a chair. While on vacation in Canada, I successfully negotiated with a group of terrorists who had seized a small bakery. The laws of physics do not apply to me.

I balance, I weave, I dodge, I frolic, and my bills are all paid. On weekends, to let off steam, I participate in full-contact origami. Years ago I discovered the meaning of life but forgot to write it down. I have made extraordinary four course meals using only a mouli and a toaster oven. I breed prizewinning clams. I have won bullfights in San Juan, cliff-diving competitions in Sri Lanka, and spelling bees at the Kremlin. I have played Hamlet, I have performed open-heart surgery, and I have spoken with Elvis.

But I have not yet gone to college.

What have you read that has had a special significance for you? Explain why.

I run. I know no other way to lift my spirit. On a foggy Sunday morning I leave the house at seven. I amble out my door and head down the road to the first dirt one to the left. It meanders through a woody scene for nearly a mile before turning uphill into the sun. Fifteen minutes into it, my breathing has evened and I blend with the scenery. The farmhouses, the dogs and cats, the occasional passing car, the winding trout creek—all of these frequent my thoughts, create my moving scenery. I am a runner. I am called to this by some inner restlessness. It has changed my life and given it meaning. George Sheehan, noted physician, writer, and runner, said, "If you are seeking the solutions for the Great Whys of your creation, you will have to start with the Little Hows of your day-to-day living." I am a runner. In Sheehan's book Running and Being I found a spirit who runs the same roads. Running gave him meaning, a purpose to day-to-day living. Sheehan expressed in words what I have always felt in my bones.